

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of creating a graphical display object for an executable application wherein the graphical display object is based in part on at least one of a plurality of default display objects, the method comprising:

5 receiving a definition data structure for an object wherein the definition data structure includes a plurality of display item data about a plurality of corresponding display objects;

processing the definition data structure to extract information relating to the plurality of display item data;

10 determining from the extracted information which of the plurality of display objects are default display objects;

building default display objects based at least upon default item data wherein the default item data is stored in a plurality of default definition data structures;

15 determining from the extracted information which of the plurality of display objects are custom display objects;

building custom display objects based at least upon a portion of the plurality of corresponding display item data; and

20 building a graphical display object based at least upon the default display objects and the custom display objects.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the data definition structure is stored in a text file.

25 3. The method of Claim 2 wherein processing the definition data structure to extract information relating to the plurality of display item data includes parsing a text file.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the a plurality of display item data includes screen locations and references to graphics files.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the plurality of corresponding display objects include graphical user interface objects.

6. The method of Claim 4 wherein the graphical user interface objects include at least one of programmable buttons, default buttons, windows, menus, and touch sensitive screens.

7. The method of Claim 1 wherein determining which of the plurality of display objects are default display objects includes looking for the absence of references to custom object files.

8. The method of Claim 1 wherein the plurality of default definition data structures are stored in default object files.

9. The method of Claim 8 wherein building default display objects includes reading the default object files for display object information.

Sub A1 10. A method of defining a class of graphical display objects, the method comprising:

receiving a default definition data structure wherein the default definition data structure includes information about a default graphical display object;

receiving a first class member definition data structure related to a first graphical display object wherein the first class member definition data structure includes information about the differences between the default graphical display object and the first graphical display object; and

receiving a second class member definition data structure related to a second graphical display object wherein the second class member definition data structure includes information about the differences between the default graphical display object and the second graphical display object.

11. A method for defining a plurality of related display configurations for a computer program which is capable of reading display configurations from a file, wherein the plurality of related display configurations define which graphical elements will appear in the display configuration, where the graphical elements should appear within the display, and functional information for the graphical elements, the method comprising:

receiving a selection of a group of related display configurations;  
determining which elements are common to more than one of the display configurations selected; and

providing a display configuration family definition wherein the display configuration family definition includes default values for common elements and configuration specific values.

5 12. A method of defining a class of graphical display objects, the method comprising:

means for receiving a default definition data structure wherein the default definition data structure includes information about a default graphical display object;

10 means for receiving a first class member definition data structure related to a first graphical display object wherein the first class member definition data structure includes information about the differences between the default graphical display object and the first graphical display object; and

15 means for receiving a second class member definition data structure related to a second graphical display object wherein the second class member definition data structure includes information about the differences between the default graphical display object and the second graphical display object.

13. A system for creating a class of graphical display objects, the system comprising:

20 a default class definition module configured to receive a default class definition of a graphical display object;

a class member module configured to receive a first class member definition of a first graphical display object related to the default class definition; and

25 the class member module further configured to receive a second class member definition of a second graphical display object related to the default class definition and different from the first class member definition.

14. A system for building a graphical display object, the system comprising: a class definition module configured to receive a default class definition and first class member definition;

30 a definition extraction module configured to extract information relating to a graphical display object from the first class member definition and to extract

informa relating to the graphical display object from the default class definition; and

a graphical object builder module configured to build the graphical display object based at least upon the extracted information from the first class member definition and the extracted information from the default class definition wherein the extracted information from the first class member definition overrides at least a portion of the extracted information from the default class definition.

15. A graphical display object system for building graphical display objects, the graphical display object system comprising:

means for receiving class definitions including a default class definition and first class member definition;

means for extracting information relating to a graphical display object from the first class member definition and the default class definition; and

means for building a graphical display object based at least upon extracted information from the first class member definition and the default class definition wherein the extracted information from the first class member definition overrides at least a portion of the extracted information from the default class definition.

add P2